

September 29, 2005

**Ryegate Newspapers:
Harlowton - The Times-Clarion
Roundup - Roundup Record-Tribune**

**RE: Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment Released on
Permit for a Rock Collecting Site in Wheatland County**

Dear Editor:

**Please place the following notice in the legal publication section of
your newspaper:**

Legal Notice

**Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment Released on Permit for a
Rock Collecting Site in Wheatland County**

Big Sky Masonry (Big Sky), P. O. Box 4306, Bozeman, MT filed an application on May 24, 2005 for an Operating Permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Environmental Management Bureau in Helena. Big Sky collects building stone under the provisions of a Small Miner Exclusion Statement (SMES). Big Sky has exceeded the limit of disturbed acreage allowed under a SMES and has applied for an operating permit. With this permit, Big Sky may quarry sandstone found along outcrops, hilltops, and other areas where commercial sandstone is available and would continue to collect building stone from the one site. Currently, only the one site is active. The proposed quarry is 6.5 miles south of Shawmut, MT in Sections 3 and 4 in Township 6 North and Range 17 East. Other sites could be added in the future. Big Sky would apply for amendments and revisions to the operating permit as required.

The proposed operation has been reviewed for compliance under a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a General Quarry Operating Permit published by the DEQ in February 2004. DEQ has determined that this operation does not meet the requirements listed in the SEA because Big Sky would have more than 5 acres unreclaimed at one time. Big Sky cannot receive an operating permit until additional environmental analysis is completed. DEQ has released a Draft CEA on the proposed operating permit.

If Big Sky develops additional lease agreements on other ranches in the future, they would have to apply for an amendment or revision to the operating permit. If a permit is issued, Big Sky will post a reclamation bond to ensure reclamation after completion of the quarrying and rock collecting activities.

The applicant seeks approval of its application for an operating permit that would cover up to approximately 1000 permit acres. Reclamation plans call for the reclamation of all surface disturbances.

Copies of the Draft CEA and application can be reviewed by the public at DEQ offices at 1520 E. 6th Ave., in Helena, MT. Please submit comments on the Draft CEA by October 31, 2005. For information on the project, copies of the Draft CEA and to submit comments on the Draft CEA, contact:

Patrick Plantenberg
Operating Permit Section Supervisor
Environmental Management Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
(406) 444-4960 or e-mail at pplantenberg@mt.gov

The Draft CEA will also be posted on the DEQ web page:
www.deq.state.mt.us.

Please send your invoice, tear sheet, and affidavit of publication to DEQ at the above address to the attention of Patrick Plantenberg. Please indicate that the bill applies to Doc # EMB5036045. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patrick Plantenberg
Operating Permit Section Supervisor
Environmental Management Bureau

File pending bigskymasonry.37
G:\emb\op\corres\pp\bigskymasonrydeapubnot.doc

PP/tme